

ONEC

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notes for *discussion leaders*

The ability to make and evaluate
group decisions is basic to
democratic practice

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WHY HAVE A LEADER IN A DISCUSSION GROUP

The leader:

- * Is responsible for getting the discussion started
- * Guides the group through each of the stages of decision making
- * Keeps the group or any member from wandering away from the subject
- * Encourages the expression of individual opinions among the members
- * Ensures that each new idea is clear to all of the members and is considered by the group
- * Encourages friendly understanding among the members
- * Has a general knowledge of the subject under discussion
- * Encourages summarizing at appropriate times
- * Is generally responsible for securing the resource aids that the group wants
- * Is generally responsible for securing the best available accommodation

Note

The more experienced and co-operative the members become, the less they need a leader in their discussions.

To reach a considered decision a group
must go through several
CLEARLY-DEFINED STAGES

** Recognize the problem

"What are we talking about?"

** Examine the problem

"What do we know about this and similar situations?"

** Look at the facts

"Do we need more information about the subject?" "Where can we get it,—books, pamphlets, films, people, etc.?"

** Propose tentative decisions

"What is your opinion, and yours, and yours—and mine?" "In each case, does the group accept, modify, reject?"

** Select the most acceptable one

"After examining all of those decisions, where are we as a group?"

** Evaluate in retrospect

"What have been the consequences of the action or opinion that we accepted?"

The group achieves more when the LEADER
shows desirable

PERSONAL ATTITUDES

A good leader is:

- * Friendly,
- * Fair but firm in protecting the status and opinions of each member,
- * An attentive listener,
- * Patient in contentious situations,
- * A clear thinker in helping the group to interpret and correlate,
- * Not aggressive in urging his own opinions,
- * Able to summarize clearly and concisely,
- * Sensitive to the extent of group agreement at any point in the discussion,
- * Confident that the group decision will be more effective than the decision of any single member.

The three chief criteria for good leadership:

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

The "know-how" of group leadership techniques.

EXPERIENCE

Practice in leading people to effective group decisions.

UNDERSTANDING

A warm appreciation of the purpose and the people.